1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

Purification of the land when some one is sold: When a person sells
567 a son or a brother, he may not tell the *Ten'dan*', nor will the latter take
783 any notice, but sooner or later some misfortune will befall the vendor,
793 or some of his family, and on consulting the *bay* (soothsayer) he will be
593 informed that his having sold some one is the cause; he will be advised to give a cow, sheep, or goat to the *Ten'dan*'. He will give the offering to the land, saying: 'My father, there was a famine, and some one sold his own son, and he has brought these things. Receive them and prevent headache and belly-ache, and give them to the land.'

769 I asked my informant why he used his father's spirit as an inter-
793 mediary. He replied, 'My ancestor knew the land before myself; all
783 our ancestors are in the ground, which is a *bagere*' (shrine).

Duties of the Ten'dan' in Connexion with the Making of a New Farm:
793 The man about to make a new farm will sacrifice to his ancestor through
782 the head of his compound. He will then take a fowl to the *kpasodan*'[1]
241 (the tenant of that land) who will give the offering to his ancestor.
427 This tenant had originally approached the *Ten'dan*' before acquiring the land, and the sub-tenant, therefore, apparently need not again do so. A *Ten'dan*', on giving land to any one for the first time, will ask for fowls (not white ones), one for his father, one for the land. 'After sacrificing, I will conduct the man to the land, take a hoe, break the ground, and tell the man that he may begin cultivating. I show him the boundaries of his farm. I need not tell him that anything he finds on the land is mine; he knows that already. He knows, too, that if he ever refuses to allow any one to pass over his land, or if he is greedy about his crops, not giving some to those who are hungry, I have the power to drive him from the land.'

793 'The *Ten'dan*' makes the land good.' 'The *Ten'dan*' owns (or rather
● 425 owned, for in many places I found this ancient prerogative usurped by the Chiefs) all lost cows, sheep, goats, donkeys, fowls, iron, hoes, axes, and brass ornaments. A *Ten'dan*' is never succeeded by his brother
[292] or by his son. This hat [referring to the distinctive string hat worn by *Ten'dan*'] is not a rich thing. Any one in a section may become *Ten'dan*'.'

Again: 'When the Mampruse, under *Misore*, first came here, they captured a man near a well who said he was the *Ten'dan*' of Gbeo. Later on *Misore* found other *Ten'dam*' at Bare, Ka, and Kundugu. He did not kill them, but appointed them to sacrifice to the land and show him her *kyibir* (avoidances, Nankane *kyisiri*), and rights—avoidance of blood, right of *Ten'dan*' to lost property or anything found on the

[1] Nankane, *Kuwodana*.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
NAMNAM

kills a beast, I receive some, not otherwise. I own the land in the bush, not so the *Godan*.

'Things found on the land, except beads, belong to the *Ten'dan*', also lost fowls, iron, worked or unworked, goats, sheep, and cows. A horse or a donkey goes to the Chief; these are not permitted to enter my kraal. If any one found these things and kept them, his home would break. The finder of beads, guinea-fowls, a cloth, cowries, may keep them if not claimed, but if the cowries[1] were many, he would give some to the Chief and to the *Ten'dan*'. A lost child belongs to the Chief; it is forbidden for a *Ten'dan*' to take such a one, she may not eat anything with hairs (i.e. a person).'

Tattooing: A *Ten'dan*' must not have tattoo marks, but markings called *Taavelem* do not matter.[2]

Harvest Festivals: 'Beans, ground-nuts, and new crops must first be given to the groves, after which every one may eat. Only naked people may go to the groves. A *Ten'dan*' has to be so careful not to eat new crops before the groves have done so, that, when the corn is ripening, his water-pots have to be covered over to prevent any grain from being blown into them.' He concluded the above by stating: 'Our ancestors did not come from any other place. *Na Wen* (God) created our *Yaba* and allowed him to be on the land. No stranger can possess *ten-kur* (land stones).[3] Formerly we called our land Zug, and there were only thorns upon it. Then the Dagbama (Dagomba) came and ate the Chieftainship and called the land Gohe-nam or Nangoot. Our mother's children are the *Ten'dan*' of Pals (near Zuarono). They went there from this place. Our taboo is red clay; we do not use it for plastering the walls of compounds.'[4]

A rapid survey of other matters, fully described in previous chapters, revealed everywhere a uniform similarity in customs and beliefs with those of their neighbours. A more intensive investigation will no doubt reveal differences in detail here and there, but the task of recording these I must leave to others and pass on to examine the next tribe, the Kusase.

[1] See p. 378.
[2] This prohibition was, I was informed, only local.
[3] See p. 256.
[4] See footnote 6, p. 244.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920) 1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

Tenedan' will tell the land that if she permits the sowing, and good crops result, that he will give her a beast and beer. After a good harvest, each of the Elders will catch a fowl and take grain for beer, and the *Tenedan'* will take the beast and go to the *tengban* (grove) where the vow (lit. mouth) was made, and make the sacrifice. If a *Tenedan'* is very old, his son may do this for him. The sacrifice is made on a stone at the foot of a tree. This stone will receive it and give to the land. The land is not a human spirit.' The *Tenedan'* will say:

'"We asked you to help us to eat. Now we are eating, we cannot refuse you yours, receive this beer." We pour out the beer and then kill the fowls and goats. Sometimes the land will ask for a cow (through the soothsayer). The *Tenedan'* will then ask every one to give him some grain, and when he has enough, he will exchange this for a cow. Every one in the *teya* will eat some of the meat. The *Tenedan'* will take one hind leg, the head, and the skin. Women and children too will have some. Any one who hates the *Tenedan'* and eats of this sacrifice will die. The *Tenedan'* and the *Tey-kpeem* (Elders of the *teya*) always discussed town affairs together.'

Succession to the Tenedan'ship: 'When a *Tenedan'* dies, his next eldest brother succeeds. If he has no brothers, then, his eldest "son"; that means the eldest of all the "sons" among the *Tenedan'* and his brothers. In some towns, a man who has a brother may not become a *Tenedan'*, but it is not so among the Kusase. A *Tenedan'* had power to drive a man out of the *teya*. A wise man would listen and go, but a fool would remain until he lost everything.'

Tenedan' and the Land: 'A *Tenedan'* is in charge of all uncultivated land. Any one who wishes to cultivate there will tell the *Tenedan'*, saying, "*Seare* (uncultivated ground) (Nankane, *seka*) lies there and I wish to make a farm upon it". The *Tenedan'* will send a boy to look at the place and show the man the boundaries. The man will turn up the soil a few times in the presence of this messenger. After the farmer has worked on this land for some time, he will brew beer, and take a fowl and give to the *Tenedan'* to sacrifice to the land. This he will do in his own compound, giving it to his father's *bagr* (shrine) to give to the land, saying: "Father, receive this fowl and beer; somebody has seen some uncultivated land, which he wishes to farm; he has brought this fowl and beer; receive it and give to your father to give to the land that the farmer may get crops". The remainder of the beer is for those who are helping him to clear the land and the *Tenedan'* will also send his son to pour some on the land and say:

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
Kusase

THE KUSASE

'"Land, receive your beer and drink; a person wishes to farm. Permit the workers to rise up from their labours without headache and belly-ache."

'When the farmer gets each new crop, he gives the *Tenedan*' a large bundle of grain, and from time to time a large pot of beer and a guinea-fowl, that is, if his belly has been washed (if he is happy). If this farmer later leaves the land even for many years, it still belongs to him, and when he dies, that place is for his "sons", but if he gives it up entirely, and some one else wants it, the *Tenedan*' will first direct him to that man or to his family. The *Tenedan*' still "owns" the land which he has given away, because anything that is found on it still belongs to him. He, the farmer, owns the *kobo* (the right to cultivate) but he could never sell it. In olden days *dawa dawa* trees belonged to the *Tenedan*', even if growing on a man's land, and no one dared to pick the fruit, even in the uncultivated bush, but when the tree was growing on a man's own *saman* (farm near his compound), the *Tenedan*' would share the fruit with him. Shea butter trees in the bush belonged to all the town; those on family farms to that family, those on a privately owned farm to the owner of that plot. The reason that *dawa dawa* trees belonged to the *Tenedan*' is because these trees grow up owing to some one having eaten the seed and passed it in his excrement.'

Lost Animals: 'Lost fowls, sheep, goats, cows, belonged to the *Tenedan*'. I here asked about treasure trove in the form of cowries. Expressions of horror were manifested at the idea of the finder taking these. 'No one would touch such a find; the finder would cover them up and not even let any one know; they belong to the land and the spirits.'

'In the case of beads, a *baa* (soothsayer) will probably tell the finder that they are "*Wen*" (God) and he will keep them. Any one found on the land, who had no master, belonged to the *Tenedan*'. He was a *Ten-pin* (a gift from the land). Dead elephants or antelope if it were not known who had killed them, belonged to the *Tenedan*'; if known who had wounded them, the *Tenedan*' only received a hind leg.'

Go-dan: 'We used to have a *go-dan*; he was one who had once lost a relative in the bush and when the seasonal hunting parties go hunting he is in charge of them, and receives a foreleg of each animal killed. He is really running after his lost brother, and the others are helping him. The *go-dan* would give the *Tenedan*' two forelegs, after the hunting, and some fowls before the hunting begins. The *go-dan* does

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

or personal mishaps. They do not attempt to control nature by means of ritual, though the content of their prayers might persuade the superficial observer that this is their object. Their ritual is concerned with the effects of natural phenomena and physiological happenings on the fate of the individual and the coherence of the community. Ritual is the means of fortifying the individual and the society against these effects. Tallensi believe that the fate of individuals and of communities depends on their relationships with mystical powers. Natural phenomena are the medium, as it were, by means of which these powers intervene in human affairs. If men offend them, they will intervene disastrously; if men please them, they will intervene beneficently. And men offend or please the mystical powers by the manner in which they behave to one another and by the way in which they observe the moral norms of the society and the ritual duties that symbolize these norms. Ritual—that is, sacrifice and prayer—is a means of keeping up a good relationship with the mystical powers. These, as we know, are principally the ancestors and the Earth.

Striving after Security: the Ritual Background

We have tried to state briefly how the Tallensi connect their ritual conceptions with their striving after personal prosperity and social security. This can be put in another way. The individual farmer, working his own land with the aid of his dependants for their common subsistence, looks to his and their immediate ancestors for spiritual protection. He and his dependants are personally responsible for the success of their efforts in the working of their fields. They are also personally responsible for the goodwill of their immediate ancestors. The sacrifices and prayers they offer to their ancestors at sowing and harvest express these private concerns. They enable them to enjoy the fruits of their labour with a clear conscience and to overcome the demoralizing effect of accidents, which they regard as private misfortunes.

On the other hand, public calamities are associated with the mystical powers of the Earth, which are a symbolical projection of the common concerns of mankind. By prayers and sacrifices the ritual officers who represent the community in relation to the Earth and the Earth in relation to the community, the tendaanas, preserve the benevolence of the Earth towards mankind. Even though ritual measures often and obviously fail to prevent a public calamity, they serve to reintegrate the community after the calamity has passed. The idea of the Earth's being concerned with the common good corresponds to the fact that the cultivations of individuals are but parcels of land cut from the limitless earth.

Just as the earth's surface is limitless, so the mystical power of the Earth is universal.[1] All men everywhere acknowledge this in the ritual observances by which they show their respect for the Earth. The most important of these observances are the rules concerning 'things found on

[1] The word *tɛŋ* belongs to the *ka—si* Noun Class and takes the third person singular pronoun *ka*. This is the pronoun always used to refer to the earth in its material aspect. But in its mystical aspect the Earth is commonly referred to by the third person singular pronoun *a* which is primarily used for persons. To conform with this rule, we write 'earth' in the first sense with a lower-case initial letter, and 'Earth' with a capital letter for the latter.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the earth (*tɛŋɔnpiima*)'. As we have previously noted, any article or stray animal, the owner of which is unknown, is a *tɛŋɔnpiimɔr*. It must be handed to a tendaana. The rule applies to stray fowls, goats, sheep, and especially to objects of iron; and it is most scrupulously observed. A hoe or an axe, for instance, can safely be left lying about on a farm. Tallensi speak with awe of the sacrilege of appropriating a 'thing found on the Earth'. They say that swift retribution invariably overtakes a sinner, and they quote the example of those who occasionally break the taboo, by accident or purposely. It is particularly heinous to take anything found near an Earth shrine, where the mystical power of the Earth is directly localized. Even children are fearful of picking up bits of rubbish near *tɛŋgbana*. Breaches of Earth taboos serve, in the long run, to increase the respect in which they are held. The native is constantly reminded, by these taboos, that the useful, material earth is only the façade of the universal mystical Earth. They remind him that the security and satisfaction he derives from the utilization of the earth's resources are conditional upon his moral behaviour.

We have examined the relation of the concept of the Earth in its mystical aspect to the great public calamities that threaten the physical basis of the existence of the natives. But this concept has a positive side, too. When men do not offend it, the Earth permits crops to flourish, women to bear children, and men's enterprises to succeed. Locusts, Tallensi say, when they rationalize the powers they attribute to the Earth, come up out of the earth; tornadoes sweep across its surface; but, also, crops grow on the earth; homesteads stand on it; men walk on it; out of it they dig the roots they use to cure their illnesses and make magical defences for themselves; in it they bury their dead. All these services of the material earth have their reflex in the ritual values attached to the mystical Earth.

All Tallensi stand in awe of the Earth. We have learnt that they speak of it as 'a living thing', meaning by this that it intervenes mystically in human affairs in the same way as the ancestor spirits do. When they talk of the Earth they mention its remorseless punishment of sacrilege, and the things it prohibits, not its blessings. Yet it is the symbol to them of the forces that promote the common welfare of all mankind without discrimination. Thus a wandering stranger is a 'thing found on the earth'; but he is given to a chief and not to a tendaana. Chiefs are ritually qualified to sell a human being into slavery; a tendaana would commit a sacrilege against the Earth if he did so. As the priest of the Earth it is his duty to protect human beings, keep the peace among them, and be watchful against the dangers that threaten them. The dog lives in such close association with man that it has quasi-human qualities, and therefore stray dogs must also be surrendered to chiefs. And this holds for stray cattle, too, which are also closely identified with man owing to their great economic value and their special importance as sacrificial animals.

Everywhere, too, the Earth forbids the shedding of blood in strife, and, in the neighbourhood of important Earth shrines, the raising of the alarm signal (a long-drawn-out, high-pitched cry *ya-a-a-a-hi*) as a call to arms, and therefore to bloodshed. Men who transgress have to pay heavy

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

his ritual powers and duties give a tendaana very great prestige and considerable moral authority over people living on his *tey* whether or not they belong to his clan. At Tongo, for instance, the Gbizug tendaana is spoken of and treated with a respect little short of reverence, both in the formal interclan politico-ritual relations and in commonplace relations of everyday life. 'He owns the land (*ɔn nso tey la*)', Tongo people say gravely, 'we are strangers here. We only grow our millet here to feed ourselves. If we offend the tendaana he can drive us away from here.' The last part of this statement is not literally true. A tendaana cannot drive people off their ancestral dwelling and farm-land; to say the least it would be ethically evil. It is not legal but ritual action that the statement implies. I have seen a tendaana's curse throw a person into a state of anxiety that persisted for days, until a reconciliation was effected. But this was anxiety concerning the mystical consequences of the tendaana's curse, without any assumption as to its jural implications. The term 'owner' applied to a chief or tendaana, as we have stated earlier, is simply a means of subsuming in one concept the configuration of rights and duties, privileges and obligations which defines the relations of a community with its politico-ritual heads in reference to its local framework and to the common values symbolized in ritual doctrine and practice. The material earth and the mystical Earth meet in the functions of tendaanas.

Many Tallensi are able to formulate the distinction between the earth in its physical, utilitarian aspect and the Earth in its ritual manifestations. But in general the distinction is inherent in the economic and politico-ritual institutions of the natives rather than expressed in explicit doctrine or language. Whenever or wherever the concept *tey* comes up it tends to be ambiguous. It suggests both aspects of the earth, though the major emphasis may be on one or the other. It is as if neither aspect of the earth can appear without the other following like its shadow.

This holds particularly with the *tendaanditiɔ* clans. Their ritual bonds with their *tes* form a halo around their utilitarian relations with the earth. In most of these clans, therefore, it is a taboo of the Earth to sell parcels of land. To sell farm-land (*kuo*) is like selling pieces of the mystical *tey* to which they are bound by the strongest ties of interest, emotion, and values. Namoo clans which do not have tendaanas do not feel this strong and direct tie with their *tey* in its mystical aspect. The utilitarian, material aspect of the earth falls apart from its mystical counterpart more easily for them. Hence it is mostly in such communities that farm-land is sold. But even Namoos say that the earth as such, the *tey*, cannot be sold. In practice the sale of farm-land is a sale of usufructuary rights and is confined to clansmen or kinsmen as we know. It is, always, a transaction between men who are bound to one another by the fundamental common and mutual interests of Tale collective life. Men cannot buy land in a Tale settlement in which they have no kin. In this, as in other aspects of their relationship towards locality, the Namoos put the major emphasis on the coherence of the community as this is focused in the chiefship. And fundamentally the coherence of the community is as indivisible as the continuity of territory. The Chief of Tongo, for example, exercises an ever-present influence on the prosperity and welfare of the members

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of his own sub-clan. This is the central field of integrated social relations pivoting on this chiefship. But his ritual status also affects the prosperity and welfare of Zubiuŋ and Zoo directly and that of the Hill Talis indirectly. In fact, in the last resort, it affects all the clans of Taleland that have a place in the cycle of the Great Festivals. 'The community (*teŋ*) cannot be subdivided (*bɔk*)', the Chief of Tongo once told me in explanation of the ritual significance of his office. Famine, pestilence, war cannot be dammed and confined to one place. And so if the Chief of Tongo dies the whole country suffers, though his own clan will perhaps suffer most and the remoter zones of his politico-ritual influence least.

The bonds between man and land, community and locality that are so fundamental in the structure of Tale society cannot be understood apart from this context of ritual values and moral norms. Difficult as they are to grasp and pin down in exact language, they are as ever present to the native's mind as his sentiment of attachment to his native soil. They cause men who have been away from home for many years to give up splendid farms in Mampurugu or good jobs in Kumasi to return to take up their patrimonial land.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

This aspect of the *Bɔyar* cult had great economic and social importance, in the past, for the Hill Talis. The pilgrims bring gifts of salt, cloth, hoes and so forth, nominally for the *Bɔyar*, that is, the Primordial Ancestor, who is believed to manifest himself in the oracular voice. Actually these gifts are secretly shared among the heads of the maximal lineages which own the particular *Bɔyar*. Nowadays these gifts are of small, though by no means negligible, worth, for all these commodities can be bought in any market, far more cheaply than in the past. But in the past they represented a valuable source of supply of scarce and highly prized goods.

Again, the visits of the pilgrims are annually reciprocated by a visit to the client village of representatives of the Talis lineage which is its sponsor with the *Bɔyar* to which it owes ritual allegiance. These ritual visits are made in order to consecrate local shrines representing the *Bɔyar*, to release pilgrims and children born to them from special taboos, and to perform the ritual shaving of the children by which they are formally placed under the spiritual guardianship of the *Bɔyar*. But these services are paid for in cowries and other gifts, and portions of the animals sacrificed are taken home and added to the meat supply of the sponsors. Young men go along on these ritual tours carrying fowls for sale in the client villages, and sometimes buy grain or yams in return.

The pilgrim traffic was, therefore, in former times an economic asset of the first importance as the Hill Talis and their neighbours themselves point out. It gave them also a wider range of social and cultural relationships than their own restricted community. People travelling to and from the Tong Hills on ritual errands carried the sacred emblems of the *Bɔyar* cult and were safe from molestation.

Some twenty years ago the pilgrim traffic took a new turn. Tallensi were coming into contact with Ashanti and the coast, and thus news of the Tong Hills 'fetishes' reached those areas. Men from the Hills, with a mixture of inborn business acumen and sincere faith in the magical powers of their oracle cult, advertised the cult quietly. A trickle of pilgrims from these wealthy and comparatively sophisticated areas began to flow northwards. And the trickle soon became a broad stream. Rich and poor, farmers, traders, chiefs, commoners, literate and illiterate, pagans and Christians joined the stream. To-day this traffic is a major industry of the Tong Hills.

These pilgrims[1] from the south come with extraordinarily varied wishes to lay before the *Bɔyar*. They beg for children, for health, for wealth, for power, for the success of farming and business enterprises, for victory in litigation, for help in a career or in the prosecution of political aims. Most important of all, Ashanti and Colony medicine men come to purchase the privilege of ritual clientship of the *Bɔyar*. They receive the right to

[1] I am indebted to Dr. M. J. Field, formerly Government Anthropologist, Gold Coast, for some information on the Colony end of this traffic. See also her *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People* for references to 'Nana Tongo' and her paper 'Some New Shrines of the Gold Coast and their Significance', *Africa*, xiii. 2, 1940. Rattray, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 361 ff., gives a vivid description of the ceremony at the Tɔŋnaab *Bɔyar* when hundreds of southern pilgrims come to present their pleas and register their vows.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

788 set up a shrine affiliated to Tɔŋna'ab at their own homes, and these
782 shrines are used by them (*vide* Field, op. cit.) in their own ritual practice
425 to cure witchcraft and dissipate other forms of magical misfortune or misdeeds.

431 This traffic is extremely profitable to the Hill Talis concerned in it.
788 The pilgrims bring gifts in money and kind beside which the traditional
439 gifts of Mamprusi or Bulisi client villages pale into insignificance. Those
434 who have received benefits bring gifts. The medicine men who own affiliated shrines pay heavily for the privilege and bring periodical gifts in gratitude for benefits received. These vary from a pound or two to £10, £20, and in at least one case, for the authenticity of which I have good evidence, £100. In addition the pilgrims pay generously for their board and lodging and for animals which they offer in sacrifice at the *Bɔyar*.

556 From the beginning this traffic was monopolized by one maximal
439 lineage of Tɛnzugu, Gɔlibdaan yidɛm of Bunkiuk. The head of this
471 lineage, the Gɔlibdaana, a shrewd and resolute man of unbounded ambition, was, until the recent political reorganization of the country, recognized by Government as the headman of the Hill clans. He used his political authority to keep the pilgrim traffic with the south in his own hands, allowing only a minor share of the profits to go to his fellow ritual functionaries of the *Bɔyar* (Wannii) to which his lineage belongs. With the aid of the young men of his lineage and young men of other Tɛnzugu clans attracted to him by the lure of gain he has built up a complex organization for keeping contact with Ashanti and Colony pilgrims and clients and for stimulating the flow of pilgrims. By Tale standards he is a Croesus, but it would be hopeless for an outsider to attempt to estimate his wealth. It is enough to see his huge and well-kept homestead, his [595] eighty wives, the sumptuous clothes he affects, the extravagance of his gifts to friends and adherents, to realize that he must derive an income of several hundred pounds a year entirely from this pilgrim traffic.

Though he is himself the principal beneficiary of this monopoly, all the members of his maximal lineage, except one segment, co-operate in running it and benefit from it. His closest partners are some of his own half-brothers and cousins, and their share of the profits is enough to make them considerably more wealthy than the average native. Two or three henchmen belonging to other Tɛnzugu clans and the other ritual functionaries of the *Bɔyar* whose presence is essential for the performance of the rites of accepting the pilgrims get about the same 'rake-off' as his near agnates. On a rough estimate I should say that the Gɔlibdaana keeps about half the profits and divides the other half among the other [595] men interested in the business. This enables these others—his close agnates, his henchmen, and the other ritual functionaries of the *Bɔyar*—to have from five to nine wives each, where the ordinary native of similar age and status would have at most two or three wives; and the number of wives a man has is a good indication of his income in terms of food-supply and cash. The economic system of the Tallensi provides no outlets for this wealth in new economic enterprise. What cannot be invested in wives, live-stock, and clothes, or consumed in the form of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

cultivation. It is felt to be incompatible with clanship ties. Clansmen form a corporate unit, in theory made up of a vastly expanded group of brothers. In theory, every member of a clan or maximal lineage has an interest in and a potential right to inherit the property of any other member of the clan. Hence if a lineage segment dies out all the land formerly owned by its members passes into the ownership of the next higher lineage of which it forms a segment, and is vested in the head of that lineage. Thus if a man were to lend land for permanent farming to a clansman he would never be able to demand its return. The lender, moreover, would not give the land with that feeling of personal interest in the recipient's welfare and desire for his prosperity that an *ahɔb* has towards his sister's son or an *ahɔŋ* towards his mother's brother. A matrilateral kinsman gives freely, solely out of consideration for the needs of his kinsman, not because the latter has a right to what he asks for; and the spirit in which the gift is made carries with it the blessings of the giver's ancestors. There is an advantage to the giver in that what is voluntarily given can be taken back without affecting the relationship of the parties, and an advantage to the recipient in that restoring the borrowed land to its owner does not mean a surrender of a right.

I have recorded the ownership of a large number of bush-farms. They fall into three approximately equal groups: those which are said to have belonged to the lineage from time immemorial; those which it is claimed were bought by an ancestor; and those which, it is said, were obtained by an ancestor by gift from a mother's brother or other matrilateral kinsman. The latter explanation is so common and so stereotyped that it may well be mythical in many cases. But cross-checking and the fact that such gifts are still commonly made show that the claim is true for most cases. I witnessed the whole procedure twice, when two men well known to me obtained gifts of bush-farms from matrilateral kinsmen. Ɔmara, a Zoo man, obtained his from the head of the inner lineage at Zubiuŋ to which his paternal great-grandfather's *ahɔb* had belonged; and Sambura from Ba'ari obtained his from his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's lineage at Tongo. These cases are the more significant in that it has been the practice, for several generations, for Tongo people to get land from their matrilateral kinsmen at Zoo, and for Ba'ari people to resort to their kinsmen at Yayazoor for grants of bush-farms.

The procedure is as follows. A man looking for a new bush-farm sees a suitable piece of land which he knows belongs to his true or to a classificatory mother's brother's lineage (*ahɔb yidɛm*). He ascertains that it has not been cultivated for the last ten or fifteen years, which suggests that the owners are not hard pressed for land. He then goes to 'beg' (*soh*) the land from his *ahɔb yidɛm*. The land Ɔmara desired belonged to his lineage *ahɔb*[1] Dawoog's inner lineage; and partly for this reason,

[1] I.e. the progenitrix of Ɔmara's medial lineage had been a daughter of Dawoog's inner lineage.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

partly because Ɔmara's relationship was with the whole inner lineage, not with Dawoog personally, the request had to be placed before the assembled elders of the inner lineage. The land could not have been granted without their unanimous consent. This having been obtained, a day was fixed for handing over the land. Early in the morning of the appointed day Ɔmara, followed by his oldest son, arrived bringing a fowl and a guinea-fowl and a large basket of guinea corn. Dawoog then summoned all the men of his inner lineage, and proceeded to sacrifice the birds to his lineage ancestors at the lineage *bɔɣar*. Addressing the ancestors he explained all the circumstances of their 'grandson' Ɔmara's request and exhorted them to bless his labour and to grant that the new farm might bring him prosperity. It was a long prayer detailing exactly how Ɔmara was related to Dawoog's lineage and promising that he would bring further offerings in gratitude to the *bɔɣar* whenever the new farm produced good crops. The flesh of the birds was divided amongst all present, including Ɔmara, in accordance with the customary rules.

Ɔmara and his son, accompanied by two young men and an elder of the *ahɔb yiri* deputed by Dawoog, then repaired to the bush-farm. The elder showed Ɔmara the boundaries of the farm and the young men hoed a strip along one boundary to symbolize marking them out (*kyie*). They then set to, with the aid of Ɔmara and his sons, to hoe a small patch, and so symbolically to hand over the right of working the farm. This was symbolized, also, in a simple rite in which the elder handed Ɔmara a large pellet of soil from the farm, mixed with a handful of the flour used in the sacrifice to the *bɔɣar*, to eat.

The procedure was identical in the case of Sɔmbura, with one exception. The land belonged to his *ahɔb* Sayamane's nuclear lineage, so there was no need to obtain the consent of the elders of his inner lineage. Sayamane did, however, inform them because, as he put it, 'you cannot undertake so important a transaction without the knowledge of your "brothers" and "fathers", and besides, telling them makes them witnesses to the act'. It means that there will always be some member of the inner lineage who knows the circumstances and conditions of the gift.

Tallensi attach very great importance to the ritual steps in this transaction. They secure the blessing of his matrilateral ancestors for the recipient of the land. Without this, they believe, failure and even disaster would overtake him when he starts farming the new bush-farm; for, they say, the land really belongs to the ancestors who first cultivated it. Moreover, the ritual formalities also have an explicitly stressed jural function. It is a solemn covenant between the parties, made in the presence of the ancestors, in which all those who have rights in the land avow their consent to the gift and the recipient pledges himself to abide by the implicit conditions of the tenure of the land. The arrangement

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

has the sanctions of the ancestor cult behind it, and the guarantee of having been made with the public consent of all who have an interest in the land.

The recipient pays no rent or dues for the land. During the first three or four years he must give a basket of guinea corn or millet to the grantors after every harvest. If he has had good crops it will be a large basketful; if he has had a poor season it will be a small basket. In subsequent years he need only bring a gift of grain if his crops are good and if he wishes to do so. Some of this grain will be ground into flour and a libation poured to his matrilateral ancestors at their *bɔyar*, expressing thanks for their beneficence. This serves also to reaffirm the ownership of the land by the grantors. Occasionally, too, he may bring a fowl to offer at the ancestral *bɔyar* of his *ahɔb* lineage in gratitude for the beneficence of the ancestors whose land he is working.

In principle, the lineage that grants the land can recover use of it at any time by giving the recipient a year's notice. But this right would only be exercised, in practice, if the latter offends them in any way—for instance, by withholding the gifts of grain in spite of having excellent crops. As a rule, therefore, the *ahɔŋ* retains the use of the land until he no longer requires it. It then reverts automatically to its proper owners. If the original recipient dies, his son may continue to use the land without specially renewing the arrangement with his *ahɔb yidɛm*.

Now supposing the farm is so large that the recipient need not cultivate all of it at one time. By cultivating and fallowing different portions of the farm in rotation he and his sons after him may keep it in use continually. If this goes on for two generations, by which time all the individuals who were present in person at the original transaction are probably dead, the land passes into the effective ownership of the original recipient's lineage, in the third generation. The successors of the original grantor no longer have the right of recovering the land but they are still the nominal owners of the land. If it is wholly abandoned they may resume occupation; the users may not sell the land; and if they grossly offend the nominal owners, the latter can, in theory, turn them off it.

This right is most emphatically claimed, though it is, by all accounts, very rarely exercised. An incident concerning Ɔndieso is suggestive of what might happen. Ɔndieso quarrelled with his neighbour and the head of his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's lineage, the Gbizug Tɛndaana. The latter, in his anger, ordered Ɔndieso to leave the land he was farming. This land had been given to Ɔndieso's grandfather by his mother's brother, the then Gbizug Tɛndaana. Ɔndieso, previously defiant, was filled with dismay. Not to comply with the tɛndaana's demand meant risking both the wrath of his matrilateral ancestors and the vengeance of the Earth whose cult is so closely bound up with Gbizug. So he went across to Deemzeet, the head of Puhug section of

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

604
425

Tongo and therefore the senior lineage head of all Tongo, and begged him to intercede. As Deemzeet was also the head of the Gbizug Tendaana's grandfather's mother's brother's lineage, the choice was doubly fortunate. Deemzeet thereupon sent two of his sons to plead with the tendaana, who consented to withdraw his demand if Ɔndieso would bring a fowl and a guinea-fowl to sacrifice to the ancestor who had originally made the gift of the land, in sign of contrition.

Though Ɔndieso climbed down for fear of mystical retribution, both he and others maintained that the tendaana had exceeded his rights. The land Ɔndieso's grandfather had been given was no longer a bush-farm. Ɔndieso's father's brother had been given leave to build on it and the homestead had stood there for two generations. This, they considered, gave Ɔndieso a title amounting to complete ownership of the land. Had his *ahəb* been an ordinary person and not a tendaana, whose ritual position gives his fulminations the force of a curse, Ɔndieso could have ignored his demand.

It has always been and still is a frequent practice for men to solicit a site for a homestead and a piece of land to make a home farm, from a matrilateral kinsman, if they wish to set up an independent homestead. As we have recorded in our earlier book, this is how many Tongo people have come to live at Zoo and this is how many immigrants into the peripheral settlements find sites for their homes.[1] We mentioned there that it is considered to be morally wrong to refuse such a request if one has land to spare.[2] The rules of tenure are the same as for a bush-farm borrowed from a matrilateral kinsman. But if the house site and home farm have been continuously occupied by the same nuclear lineage for two or three generations, their ownership is considered to be entire. Their title rests not only on the passage of the generations but on the fact that they have begun to bury their dead there and to transmit the land in accordance with the rules of inheritance. Indeed, Tallensi say that only the person who originally granted the land can really recover it. Even his immediate heir could not compel the recipient to surrender the land. The latter could, if he wished, refuse to go. He would invoke the common ancestors of his hosts and himself and this would be sufficient—unless he had committed some particularly heinous breach of kinship amity against his hosts. Pa'anbobis furnishes a case in point. Many years ago, owing to a quarrel with his older half-brother he went to build his homestead on a bush-farm he had borrowed from his matrilateral kinsman and clansman Mambaŋya. There he lived for perhaps twenty years. Then Mambaŋya asked him to relinquish the land. He said his sons were growing up and wanted more land to cultivate. So Pa'anbobis went back to his original home. Both men understood and admitted in private that Mambaŋya's story was a polite

[1] *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 161, 221.
[2] Ibid., p. 163.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

604
425

pretext. The point was that he did not wish this land to be lost to his sons altogether; and he therefore took the precaution of getting it back in his own lifetime.

If a man gives land over which he has full rights of disposal to his own sister's son, this amounts to an outright gift. The land belongs to the sister's son and his heirs in perpetuity. This is always explained by the jural fiction that the *ahəb* (identifying himself with his sister) has, like a father, bestowed a portion of his own land on 'his child'. When the *ahəb* dies the *ahəŋ* has the same rights in respect of the share of the patrimonial land allocated to him as the *ahəb*'s own sons have in respect of any shares he might have given them. It is an application of the rule that siblings are equals. Barimoda and Kpɛlimɛrəme both had farms given to them on these terms by their mothers' brothers and both said they would never part with their farms. Wherever a branch of one clan is found settled on land coming under the ritual jurisdiction of a neighbouring clan, the origin of the relationship is traced back to such a gift of land. Thus Nəŋsuur yidem of Tongo occupy and own land under the ritual jurisdiction of the Zubiuŋ-Yakəra Tɛndaana.[1] They ascribe their rights in their land and the fact that they are living on Zubiuŋ land to their founding ancestor's having been a true sister's son of the Zubiuŋ-Yakəra Tɛndaana of his time. He was given a very large piece of land by the tɛndaana and came to live there. It is this land that his descendants now occupy.

The Status of an Ahəŋ as a Foster-child in his Ahəb's Family

604
597

We have mentioned before that a boy who loses his own parents and cannot settle down with a proxy father sometimes goes to live with his mother's brother. A few cases of this sort are found in every settlement. As a rule the boy eventually goes back to his natal home to settle down there; occasionally he settles permanently in his mother's brother's settlement. In any case, he never loses touch with his natal home and never forfeits his rights and status in his own lineage and clan. He does not, as we know, become a member of the lineage or clan of his *ahəb*. This brings us back to the question of the jural relations of *ahəb* and *ahəŋ*.

A boy who grows up in his mother's brother's household is treated exactly like a son and is indistinguishable from a son of the family, to the outsider. Thus it was many months before I discovered that Puvəlimra was not the Gbizug Tɛndaana's son but his sister's son. He was probably in his late twenties and had lived with the tɛndaana since boyhood. He continued to farm with the tɛndaana after the latter's oldest son had established his own household. He was, indeed, the tɛndaana's right-hand man, more trusted by him, in some ways, than

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 59.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

if it suits their purpose. Men have always been prepared to go to great lengths to win an office so coveted as that of a chief or tendaana. In addition, they argue, the breach of custom is not so outrageous as it seems. For the *ahəŋ* can claim that if his mother had been born a man he would have had an unquestionable right to the office.

This argument gains strength from the fact that in certain cases an *ahəŋ* or a sororal lineage is delegated to exercise rights vested in a particular office or lineage. Thus the people of Tongo maintain that in former times the Chief of Tongo always had the right to 'strip (*yɛa*)' all locust-bean trees in Tongo and the adjacent settlements, including Tɛnzugu. Now it would have been neither tactful nor dignified for the chief to send his wives or clansmen to strip locust-bean trees growing in another settlement. Therefore every chief delegated one of his 'sister's sons' in each settlement to harvest the pods for him. The *ahəŋ* was entitled to keep some of the locust-bean pods he harvested, but had to send the bulk to the Chief of Tongo. Tongo people say that the 'sisters' sons' gradually ceased sending the chief's share to him and took full possession of the trees, in much the same way as a man obtains *de facto* possession of land loaned to one of his ancestors by a matrilateral kinsman.

Certain powers normally held by tendaanas only are sometimes vested in lineages that do not have tendaanas. Thus at Tongo the people of Seug live on land that comes under the ritual jurisdiction of the Zoo Yiraaŋ.[1] But when they dig a new grave they do not send for the Yiraaŋ to come and 'mark out the grave (*kyɛbəg voor*)' ritually, as they should do, according to the letter of custom. The head of one segment of Seug performs the rite instead. He keeps the carcass of the goat sacrificed, but sends the head and skin to the Zoo Yiraaŋ. This arrangement is found wherever people of one clan live on land that falls under the ritual jurisdiction of another clan. The regular explanation is that an ancestor of the lineage head who actually marks out the grave was an *ahəŋ* of the tendaana who had ritual jurisdiction over the land when the lineage first settled there, and that the tendaana delegated this ritual duty to him and his successors.

The Ahəŋ as Intermediary

By his genealogical position an *ahəŋ* forms a link between his father's lineage and his mother's lineage; and by extension this applies to every degree of matrilateral kinship. Hence an *ahəŋ* is always chosen as intermediary in all private jural and ritual transactions between a segment of one clan and a segment of another. Marriage is the most important of these transactions. A key role in all the jural and ritual formalities necessary for the conclusion of a marriage is that of the

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 169.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

variations in the ripening of crops makes it essential, as will be clear later, for a self-supporting unit to have a supply of every type of cereal, or face starvation at certain times of the year. Early millet is grown only on the compound farms (*saman*), land immediately surrounding the compounds and kept fertile by human and animal manure and by spreading the detritus of the kitchen midden. The compound farms at the disposal of a joint family consist of irregular patches of greatly varying size scattered throughout the area of settlement of their lineage. They are acquired by inheritance, succession, or gift from the head of one's joint family or lineage. How much of it a man has depends, thus, upon his seniority within the joint family and the lineage. The head of a joint family may cultivate 6 or 8 acres of compound farm; his younger brother and prospective heir, as head of an independent unit of food economy, may have only two acres or less allotted to him.[1] The compound farm is so precious that it is regarded as sacrilege to sell or abandon it.

Guinea-corn or late millet, which ripen several months after the early millet, are grown both on compound farms and on bush farms (*poog*) from one to four miles distant from the settlements of those who cultivate them. Bush farms also descend in the line of inheritance; but they can be bought or borrowed for a term of years. If the bush land belonging to his own joint family is limited, a man can always borrow as much as he requires. A head of a joint family may require no bush farm at all if he has a large compound farm; junior men, on the other hand, depend the more upon their bush farms the less compound land they have.[2] Compound land is the most fertile and most easily worked owing to its proximity. Those who have large compound farms (e.g. elders) are less liable to food shortage than those who have mainly bush farms (i.e. younger men).

richer than the average Tale compound, as they belonged to headmen or elders. Botanical names are taken from Mr. Lynn's report.

[1] Rough calculations based on a survey of farms made for us by Mr. D. S. Commey. Mr. Lynn's records show that the Tale compound farms he measured vary from nearly 7 acres to under an acre; the average being 3·36 acres.

[2] Mr. Lynn found bush farms to vary from about 5 to 10 acres in extent. How much bush farm is cultivated depends, of course, upon the number of men co-operating and upon the food requirements of the unit, as well as upon the amount of *saman* they have.

7:Lynn G-5 (1932-1936) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

scattered compounds, or whether closer building between compounds, on land previously available for farming, enforced the system because of the increasing distance to bush land. The result is the same, however, from our point of view. Farmers living on the edge of the densely populated areas frequently have bush farms, which are farmed by shifting methods of cultivation, as well as compound farms which are farmed continuously. 241

Land Tenure.

The customs associated with the acquisition and retention of land are intimately bound up with the religion of the people. Land is recognized as having a "spirit" which requires placating to deliver of its goodness. This is done through the "tindana" (Nankani), who is the intermediary between the "spirit of the land" and the people. It is frequently heard that "Chiefs command people, not land", and a Chief approaches the land through the "tindana". Every area has a tindana; if an area develops to an unmanageable size, a new "tindana" may be appointed by the tindana who exercised authority there before it developed. The area administered by a Chief, however, is fixed; so that Chiefs' and tindanas' boundaries do not necessarily coincide. 793 622 425

To acquire a new area of land, *i.e.*, land not known to be claimed by anyone, a prospective occupant will generally first approach the Chief of the district and state his requirements. If the Chief is satisfied as to the probity of the applicant he will refer him to the tindana, who has the final say in the matter. An application is seldom, if ever, refused. A suitable offering is made through the tindana to propitiate the spirit of the land, and the tindana may indicate a site for the new compound, and make suggestions with regard to the crops to be planted. The question of rent does not arise since there are no "money crops" and agricultural land has no value in the economic sense; there are a number of seasonal dues, however, given voluntarily to the spirit of the land, through the tindana. [427]

In demarcating areas, such natural objects as stone outcrops, water-courses, and trees, are observed. This explains the reason for the irregular outline of most farms. Once land has been conveyed through the tindana, it is held in perpetuity by the family receiving it. Presumably, when a compound is first built in a bush area, sufficient land exists immediately around it to satisfy the requirements of the family. When the family grows up and the elder sons marry, they may choose to build compounds of their own. A new compound is made as close to the parent compound as possible, either upon a new land acquired from the tindana, or upon land 428 423

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

the earth with his bare foot; he may not pluck a blade of grass or engage in agriculture, and so on. Tendaanas observe none of these taboos. They again may not wear any cloth garment, but only skins, for a white gown of cloth is put upon the chief at his investiture. Cloth garments, horses, guns, are traditionally tabooed to all Tallis, since they were characteristic of the Namoos. Chief and Tendaana regard these taboos as of the very substance of their respective offices, as moral obligations to their respective communities. So also property lost on the land or stray animals must be handed over to a Tendaana on pain of supernaturally inflicted death. But stray cows, dogs, or vagrant humans go to the chief. Most important of all, the religious practices of the Tallis are dominated by the cult of the earth shrines (tɔŋbana)—sacred groves, streams, pools, etc.—to which the Namoos as a group have no access.

The polarity thus institutionally registered is paralleled by standardized political attitudes. In the sporadic fights of pre-European days Tallis and Namoos were traditional enemies. This is not only recollected in tales but vividly expressed in the military pantomine which accompanies every funeral ceremony. Tallis at their funerals fling taunts and challenges at the Namoos, and the latter retaliate at their funerals. When his patriotism is aroused, a member of one group will speak of the other group superciliously or derogatorily, forgetting for the moment, perhaps, that they are his own mother's kinsmen.

Between Chief and Tendaana, between Namoos and Tallis, there are barriers, but not a gulf, an equilibrium and not an irreconciliable disjunction. The fulcrum of this equilibrium is the Tendaana of the Gbizug lineage. Geographically placed between the Namoos and the Tallis, he is the ritual and political mediator between them. The principal Tendaana of Baari can directly approach the Chief of Tongo; but the Tendaanas of the Hill Tallis or of non-Tale clans can only approach the Chief through the Gbizug Tendaana. In the old days it was he who made peace between the traditional enemies after a fight. A ritual and social equilibrium of high tension exists between Gbizug and Tongo, symbolized in the peculiar relations of the Tendaana and the Chief. Tradition, distorted by each side to its own aggrandizement, relates that it was the first Gbizug Tendaana who received and gave land to settle on to the ancestor of the Tongo Namoos. The final and most solemn of the rites by which a new chief of Tongo is inducted, rites which will be referred to again, must be carried out by the Gbizug Tendaana. Upon him rests the responsibility and the privilege of making the sacrifices for the most sacrosanct fetish of the Tongo Chieftainship, that which safeguards the life and well-being of the Chief and thus